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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 001386

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WHA/CCA, EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2017

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL INPUT FOR TITLE III SUSPENSION OF
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. SECSTATE 65523

1B. LISBON 670

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) MFA Latin America Desk Officer Joao Batista said Portugal's relationship with Cuba has not changed over the last year and responded to reftel questions with updated information for the Title III Suspension of Libertad Act report.

12. (C) Economic activity between Portugal and Cuba is limited and mostly in the tourism and import/export sectors. The major player is the Amorim Corporation, a Portuguese-based company with offices worldwide. Its activities in Cuba focus on the tourism industry, especially in the construction and management of hotels, and import/export. The director of Amorim's tourism arm told us recently that the company planned soon to terminate its hotel management contracts in Cuba. Although the hotel business is thriving, he said heavy Cuban government regulation and taxation makes turning a profit impossible. In addition, the GOP-owned Air Portugal (TAP) flies twice weekly charter flights (using aircraft belonging to charter company White Airlines) of Portuguese tourists to Cuba between November and April; the frequency of flights at other times varies according to fluctuating demand. The Portuguese did not initiate any new trade agreements with Cuba over the last year and Batista confirmed that Portugal does not have any exchange programs with Cuba.

13. (C) The Portuguese hold firmly to the principles of protecting human rights and insist that Cuba must send clear signals in support of human rights before the EU removes its sanctions completely. Over the last several months, high-level MFA officials have reached out to us to stress their interest in collaborating closely to help shape Cuba's political transition.

14. (U) Batista told us about three high level visits that have occurred over the last six months. Cuban FM Felipe Perez Roque visited Lisbon as part of a four-stop European tour and met with Portuguese FM Amado and Parliament President Jaime Gama in March 2007 (see ref B). Cuban Deputy Minister for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation Ricardo Guerrero also visited Portugal in April. In March, Portuguese Secretary of State (equivalent to an Undersecretary) for Youth and Sports Laurentino Dias visited Cuba.

15. (C) Comment: Given the GOP's growing interest in playing a constructive role in Cuba, we believe it will continue work with us on plans to promote democracy and human rights there.

End comment.
O'Neal